

Murza who wrote a letter critical of Putin to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the nomination of Secretary Tillerson. Last Thursday, while in Moscow, he fell into a life-threatening coma believed to be caused by an unknown poison.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to normalize what President Trump is doing. We cannot afford to take our country back to an era of unchecked Russian aggression.

We need freedom. That is what is at stake.

I include in the RECORD a February 6, 2017, article by Julie Hirschfeld Davis.

[Feb. 6, 2017]

TRUMP SEEMS TO SIDE WITH RUSSIA IN  
COMMENTS ON UKRAINE

(By Julie Hirschfeld Davis)

WASHINGTON.—President Trump cast doubt on whether Moscow is backing separatists engaged in the recent escalation of fighting in eastern Ukraine, appearing to side with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, who has long denied involvement in the conflict despite evidence to the contrary.

Mr. Trump said he did not take offense at the outbreak of a lethal bout of fighting in Ukraine that came within a day of a phone conversation he had with Mr. Putin, saying of the recent clashes, “we don’t really know exactly what that is.”

“They’re pro-forces,” Mr. Trump said of the Ukrainian separatists in an interview that aired on Monday on “The O’Reilly Factor,” on Fox News. “We don’t know, are they uncontrollable? Are they uncontrolled? That happens also. We’re going to find out; I would be surprised, but we’ll see.”

Mr. Trump’s comments were the latest indication that his desire for warmer relations with Russia may be coloring his view of the conflict in Ukraine, which pits the country’s military—trained and equipped in part by the United States Army—against Russian-backed separatists. Moscow has denied involvement in the three-year conflict, despite evidence that it has provided equipment and fighters to support separatist forces in eastern Ukraine.

The president’s push for a friendlier relationship with Mr. Putin has alarmed Ukrainian officials, who fear that the pressure former President Barack Obama applied on Russia to withdraw its unacknowledged military forces from eastern Ukraine will wane.

A telephone call Mr. Trump held on Saturday with President Petro O. Poroshenko of Ukraine raised further questions about his position on the conflict and his administration’s commitment to maintaining sanctions against Russia for the annexation of Crimea.

In an official account of the call, Mr. Trump had said he was willing to work with Kiev and Moscow to resolve the conflict. But the statement referred to helping to “restore peace along the border,” while the violence has been playing out inside eastern Ukraine.

UF HEALTH SHANDS HOSPITAL  
PEDIATRIC HEART TRANSPLANT  
PROGRAM

(Mr. YOHO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Florida’s UF Health Shands Hospital pediatric heart transplant program for being named one of the best in the Nation. According to the Scientific Registry of

Transplant Recipients, this unit has had zero pediatric heart transplant deaths in the last 2½ years.

Since 2006, the UF Health Shands Transplant Center has performed a total of 120 pediatric heart and lung transplants, making it one of the most active pediatric heart transplant programs in the Southeast. In fact, in the last year, U.S. News and World Report named UF Health number one in the State and fourth in the Nation for pediatric heart surgeries and cardiology. This recognition speaks volumes about the level of care shown by the physicians and their teams at UF Health, and I look forward to watching them continue to be a leader in patient care and innovation in the coming years.

I must end with Go Gators.

PULL THE MUSLIM BAN DOWN

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me again repeat my concern, when the United States is compared to the thuggish behavior of Russian leadership, the attempt to poison individuals who are activists and opponents to that kind of oppression.

But I want to speak today to what is impacting our neighbors, Mr. Speaker, and that is the executive order that has been issued by the President of the United States. I want to dispel any myth that Members of this body who oppose the executive order are against security for this Nation.

I am a years-long member of the Homeland Security Committee, the Transportation Security Committee, the Border Security Committee, and work hard to write a stiff border security bill. But, frankly, this is a Muslim ban, and when a 17-year-old, 16-year-old from my community, from Jordan, was stopped and held for 48 hours and shipped to Chicago, that is a Muslim ban.

What I say to those who have executed it is that you have to realize that the order that you tried to copy from President Obama was not the same. It was stringent review; it was not rejection. You are rejecting Muslims and allowing others.

As a Christian, I know that Christians are not being subjected to the same kind of scrutiny. This is a Muslim ban. I ask the White House, as we go to court this evening: Why don’t you reconsider and pull that Muslim ban down?

□ 1730

WHAT HAS WASHINGTON DONE TO  
YOU?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, well, let’s see, I got a phone call from my district—one of several dozen today—and they all are kind of about the same thing: What is going on in Washington? What are they doing in Washington? What is happening? What is happening with ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act? What are they going to do about this wall? People are concerned. People want to know what is happening in Washington.

I suspect a good many of us are trying to figure out what the next steps are. It seems like every other moment something new is erupting from the White House, another tweet or another executive order, and we have had a lot of them. And so what I want to do today is to kind of go back and take a look at what has transpired over these last 2½ weeks. What has happened in Washington these last 2½ weeks?

Besides a lot of confusion, angst, and concern, some very, very important things are happening, and here is my take on it. I am going to kind of put a title on today, and I am going to say: What has Washington done to you, not for you. What has Washington done to you?

Let’s start with the very first day that President Trump was inaugurated. Well, it was all about the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare. So he set out to begin the repeal of ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act.

Oh, by the way, they are one and the same. It depends which way you are looking at this thing, but the repeal of the Affordable Care Act has dire consequences on Americans.

Some 30 million Americans could be affected, according to the Congressional Budget Office, or in my State, we are looking at maybe 5 million people could lose their health coverage, their insurance, as a result of that. There is \$16 billion that immediately flows to the State of California for the expansion of the Medicaid, Medi-Cal program in California. That would be gone. And those people that are on that program would simply not be able to get care.

It goes beyond just those who are in the exchanges. The exchange in California is working quite well. Maybe a 1½ million people in California are covered through the exchange, and they have options in most every part of the State.

In my part of the State, there are some shortcomings because services are not readily available, but there are 34 clinics managed by nine organizations that provide medical services in my district. Every one of those clinics rely upon ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act, for the services that they render. If the Affordable Care Act disappears, we repeal ObamaCare, those clinics are out of business.

And what does that mean? It means that thousands, literally hundreds of thousands of people in my district would no longer be receiving medical